DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 787 EA 022 316

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TITLE Legislative Research Studies in State Education Policy. Selected Case Studies, 1983-1986.
INSTITUTION National Conference of State Legislatures, Denver, CO.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-55516-315-7
PUB DATE May 87
CONTRACT 400-85-1004
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Awards; *Educational Change; *Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Policy Formation; Program Implementation; *State Legislation; *Teacher Recruitment; *Teacher Salaries
IDENTIFIERS *Department of Education

ABSTRACT

Since 1976 the U.S. Department of Education has helped fund 60 education policies by state legislatures. These competitive matching grants, or cost-sharing awards, have laid the groundwork for significant education reforms. This report seeks to advance information-sharing among state legislatures and between policy makers and researchers. The report contains a list of 27 cost-sharing awards funded between 1983-86 and presents 4 case studies highlighting important issues confronting state legislatures today and illustrating the different methods that legislatures use to define issues and employ research in making changes in state education policies. In 1983, Tennessee's General Assembly was stalemated over the controversial issue of rewarding teachers with higher salaries. Finally, a Select Committee on Education used a cost-sharing award to commission papers from education researchers and provide expert testimony. The committee then drafted a bill underlying the state's landmark career ladder law. In 1985, the Maine Legislature used a cost-sharing award to conduct its own field research project on teachers' decisions to stay in the classroom or leave teaching. As a result, the legislature can deal realistically with teacher supply and demand by relying on state data. The two other case studies involve a Washington State higher education funding formula research project and a South Carolina project to monitor the progress of recent educational reform efforts. (MLH)

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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES IN STATE EDUCATION POLICY

SELECTED CASE STUDIES

1983-1986

by
Dr. Terry Gnezda

Education and Job Training Program

edited by
Sharon Schwoch

Sponsored by the
National Conference of State Legislatures
with funding from the
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

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May 1987

EA022 316

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ISBN 1-55516-315-7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword v

Acknowledgments ix

1983-86 Recipients of NCSL/Education Cost-Sharing Awards xi

I Rewarding Outstanding Teachers in Tennessee: A Case Study . . . 1

II Attracting and Retaining Qualified Teachers in Maine: A Case Study 7

III Improving Higher Education Funding in Washington: A Case Study 13

IV Overseeing the State Education Reforms in South Carolina: A Case Study 19

FOREWORD

Since 1976, the U.S. Department of Education, through a contract with the National Conference of State Legislatures, has helped fund 60 education policy studies by state legislatures in 48 states and one territory. These competitive matching grants, known as cost-sharing awards, have laid the groundwork for legislatures to enact significant education reforms, including improvements in school finance, special education, higher education funding, and teacher policies.

The cost-sharing awards provide policymakers and researchers with a number of additional benefits. Averaging $8,000 to $10,000 per award, they strengthen the research capabilities of state legislatures by enabling legislators and their staffs to design and complete policy studies on their own or in close cooperation with other state and local officials, university faculty, or outside policy consultants. The subsequent reports and recommendations of one legislature also provide a valuable contribution to the education policy debates of legislatures in other states, as well as to the growing knowledge base of the education research community.

This report, funded by the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, seeks to advance further the sharing of information among state legislatures and between policymakers and researchers. It contains a list of the most recent cost-sharing awards, funded between 1983 and 1986. It also presents four case studies of education policy studies, which were selected for two reasons. First, the studies highlight important education <u>issues</u> confronting state legislatures today. Taken together, they give a good sense of the variety of issues being addressed by state lawmakers. Second, these four studies shed light on the different <u>methods</u> legislatures use to define issues and to employ research in making changes in state education policies.

The following brief case studies show how the legislatures in Tennessee, Maine, Washington, and South Carolina defined an issue, sought its resolution, and took action. These case studies can provide lessons for policymakers and researchers in other states.

Tennessee: In 1983, the General Assembly found itself at an impasse over the controversial issue of how to reward outstanding teachers with higher salaries. After the Senate Education Committee tabled one hotly contested bill, the legislature passed a resolution establishing a Joint Select Legislative Committee on Education to break the stalemate. The Select Committee used a cost-sharing award to commission papers from education researchers and to provide for expert testimony from within and outside the state. The committee then drafted a bill that became the foundation of Tennessee's landmark career ladder law in January, 1984.

Maine: In 1985, the Legislature wanted concrete information on the issue of how best to attract and retain quality teachers. The Joint Standing Committee on Education used a cost-sharing award to conduct its own field research on why teachers choose to stay in or leave the classroom and on what policies would attract bright high school seniors into teaching. As a result, the Legislature began dealing realistically with the question of teacher supply and demand, using state rather than national data.

Washington: In 1983, the Legislature became concerned about the state's method of funding higher education. The Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure, and Management, composed of legislators, educators, and citizens, used a cost-sharing award to hire two nationally recognized consultants from California to prepare a report and make recommendations. As part of their responsibilities, the consultants critiqued the strengths and weaknesses of the higher education formula systems employed in five other states. This information helped the Washington Legislature chart its own course to improve funding of higher education, not simply by passing legislation but also by strengthening the state's budgetary procedures.

South Carolina: In 1985, the General Assembly was facing an issue near and dear to virtually all state lawmakers: How can a legislative body monitor effectively the progress of its recent education reforms? South Carolina had enacted a comprehensive education reform bill in 1984, which also created a Joint Select Committee of the Educational Improvement Act of 1984 to oversee implementation of some 60 programs. The Select Committee used a cost-sharing award to define its own role in helping the state, both in

refining its education reforms and in sustaining its commitment to improving the public schools.

Each of these studies substantially contributes to the growing body of research on state education policymaking, and each helps raise critical questions for future study, where adequate information is currently unavailable. Accordingly, NCSL would like to thank the legislatures and their staffs around the country for their sustained interest in this program. We also would like to thank the executive members of our own Education and Labor Committee who, over the years, have sat as a peer review committee in hearing the testimony from each state and in being up to the difficult task of selecting the winners.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (formerly the National Institute of Education) for its continuing support of this worthwhile program. We are indebted, in particular, to Jim Fox, our OERI program officer, for his thoughtful suggestions about how to enhance the education research capabilities of state legislatures.

Dr. Peggy M. Siegel
Education Program Manager
National Conference of State Legislatures
January 1987

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Conference of State Legislatures would like to thank the following individuals who served as resources for these case studies.

Tennessee -- "Rewarding Outstanding Teachers in Tennessee":

Billy Stair, administrative assistant to Representative Jimmy Naifeh, Tennessee House Majority Leader.

Maine -- Attracting and Retaining Qualified Teachers in Maine":

Lars Rydell, legislative analyst, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis, Maine Legislature.

Washington -- "Improving Higher Education Funding in Washington":

William Chance, Former executive director of the Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure, and Management, Washington; and

Larry Davis, research analyst, Committee on Education, Washington Senate.

South Carolina -- "Overseeing the State Education Reform in South Carolina":

Joanne Anderson, research director, South Carolina Senate Education Committee; and

Trisha Bockus, research director, South Carolina Select Committee of the Education Improvement Act.

1983-86 RECIPIENTS OF EDUCATION COST-SHARING AWARDS

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

State Legislatures	Purpose of Study
1. Alabama (1985-86)	To gather information needed to enact major education reforms
2. California (1986-87)	To organize and expand public school programs to reduce dropout rates for pregnant and parenting adolescents
3. Colorado (1985-86)	To develop an implementation model for the evaluation of certificated education personnel
4. Connecticut (1985-86)	To identify the costs of particular education programs funded under the state school finance formula
5. Delaware (1985-86)	To foster dialogue among state policymakers and educators on teacher recruitment, retention, and salaries
6. Florida (1985-86)	To evaluate three parts of the state education reform act: (1) extended school day, (2) merit schools, and (3) the master teacher program
7. Illinois (1985-86)	To evaluate and coordinate state and federal "education for employment" programs
8. Kansas (1983-84)	To evaluate existing occupational education programs in light of the state's technological needs
9. Kansas (1986-87)	To organize and deliver vocational education services with emphasis on contributing to economic development in the State

10.	Maine (1985-86)	To analyze the problem of teacher recruitment and retention
11.	Minnesota (1986-87)	To study the need for a loan forgiveness program for career teachers
12.	Mississippi (1986-87)	To develop a more equitable distribution of education funds within the state
13.	Missouri (1986-87)	To study the implementation of the state's voluntary career ladder plan
14.	Nebraska (1985-86)	To study the state's early childhood special education system and its relationship to other health and handicapped services
15.	New England (1983-84)	A six-state study to assess the retraining needs of the region's work force and the role of educational institutions in meeting these needs
16.	New Hampshire (1986-87)	To study the functions and feasibility of the School Administrative Unit System
17.	North Dakota (1986-87)	To evaluate the elementary and secondary school finance formula to ensure equity
18.	Oregon (1983-84)	To establish a role for the legislature in coordinating job training and economic development policies
19.	Rhode Island (1985-86)	To evaluate a pilot state suicide prevention program
20.	South Carolina (1985-86)	To strengthen program evaluation and legislative oversight of education
21.	Tennessee (1983-84)	To study the options for attracting, providing and retraining good teachers and administrators

22.	Tennessee (1986-87)	To evaluate quality of K-12 education competencies
23.	Vermont (1985-86)	To determine the fairness and adequacy of the state school aid program, scheduled to sunset in 1987
24.	Virginia (1983-84)	To reevaluate the state's current tuition and fee policy for higher education, particularly the appropriate support level for out-of-state students.
25.	Washington (1983-84)	To evaluate and update the state's existing higher education funding policies and formulas
26.	West Virginia (1983-84)	To identify and provide for the variables most likely to contribute to effective schools
27.	Wyoming (1986-87)	To evaluate and define program equity among urban and rural school districts.

I

REWARDING OUTSTANDING TEACHERS IN TENNESSEE:

A CASE STUDY

The Study

The Tennessee General Assembly used its 1983-84 cost-sharing award to determine if a merit pay policy for primary and secondary teachers could be implemented in Tennessee, and what the consequences of such a system would be for the state.

Background

Interest in improving education in Tennessee developed as a major issue on the political agenda during the early 1980's, with upgrading the teaching profession central to the debate. Proposals that were geared toward improving teaching generally took the form of either merit pay or career ladder plans. These proposals advanced the notion that good teachers should be rewarded for good work through pay increases.

Two significant proposals received attention during this time. In 1982, after two years of study, a legislative task force on education issued "The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study," which recommended merit pay for teachers. Shortly thereafter, in January 1983, newly elected Governor Lamar Alexander revealed his "Master Teacher Plan" as part of a multifaceted education reform proposal, "Better Schools for Tennessee." The governor's plans outlined comprehensive changes in education, which were to be funded by a one-cent increase in the state sales tax.

Governor Alexander's "Master Teacher Plan" was designed as a statewide merit pay plan that would, through graduated pay increases, enable the state to recruit and retain high-quality teachers as well as encourage teachers to upgrade their skills. Since enactment of the plan was a priority of the governor's office, his administration launched an extensive campaign throughout the state for support. Although the "Master Teacher Plan" received support from the public, the business community, some sectors of the education community, and legislators from both parties, opposition to the plan also developed. By the time the legislature considered it, the plan had already been revised.

The primary source of opposition arose from the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), which strongly objected to the concept of providing incentive pay to a limited number of teachers. The TEA developed its own alternative to the "Master Teacher Plan" that provided for across-the-board salary increases and longevity incentives for all teachers. The cost estimates of the TEA proposal were comparable to those of the governor's plan.

When the legislature considered the education reform bills, the debate over teacher incentive plans and the financial implications of the legislation became controversial. Proponents and opponents lobbied intensely. Significant concern over the cost of the proposals arose, particularly since the reforms would result in substantial new spending that would necessitate a tax increase during a recession. Although legislators recognized that various constituencies

throughout the state strongly supported education reform, a majority of the members agreed that the proposals included too many unanswered questions.

After the Senate Education Committee failed to vote an education reform bill out of committee, the legislature enacted Senate Joint Resolution 96, which created a Select Committee on Education to study and develop recommendations on a variety of teacher-related issues, including teacher compensation. The Select Committee was given "unqualified" support from the leadership of both the House and the Senate and had all legislative resources available for its work. The Tennessee legislature supplemented its support with a cost-sharing award in 1983.

Methodology

The Select Committee on Education was a joint committee of the House and Senate with 10 Democrats and four Republicans. It conducted its study during the interim, December 1982 through June 1983. The committee had a legislative staff of three and was divided into three subcommittees: Teacher Compensation, Instructional Development, and Teacher Training. The method used for the study included a series of hearings in which expert testimony was heard, as well as the commissioning of specific reports. The cost-sharing award was used to bring experts to Tennessee to testify and to finance the costs associated with contracting for the reports. The governor's office continued its support of education reform but did not dominate the Select Committee's activities.

Throughout the process, committee members had decidedly different perspectives about statewide teacher compensation proposals. From the onset, opposition was strong, reflecting concern that new compensation plans would be too costly, would not work effectively, and would interfere with the long-standing precedent of local control of the schools. The committee had the opportunity to debate the issues and weigh the consequences of alternative policies in a less emotional and less distracted atmosphere than had been the case when the legislature was in session. According to committee staff, the format the committee used in conducting its study of education reform helped lessen the emotional intensity around the issues although marked differences in perspective remained.

The Hearings. The Select Committee met 14 times and received testimony from 34 witnesses. Each meeting consisted of a one-day hearing for the full committee and a one-day hearing for each subcommittee. The full Select Committee chair and the primary staff person selected the witnesses. The hearings were fairly structured and according to staff, attendance at the meetings and involvement in the process were consistently good.

Testimony was heard from a variety of witnesses, including the TEA, the American Federation of Teachers, and other professional education groups. The cost-sharing award enabled the committee to bring experts from across the country to the state to testify at the hearings. According to staff, input from these experts was particularly valuable since it provided new perspectives, void of the political heat generated from the debate over the issues, and contributed meaningful information on which the committee's recommendations were ultimately based.

The Commissioned Reports. The Select Committee commissioned study papers that provided additional data, presented objective analyses of the issues, and further supported the credibility of the committee's work. The papers included "Teacher Compensation and Career Ladders: Policy Implications from Research," and "The Tennessee Administrator/Supervisor Evaluation System." Faculty and staff from Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee prepared these policy papers.

Major Findings

Based on the information generated through the testimony and policy reports, the Select Committee developed a series of recommendations for education reform. These recommendations, supported by a slim majority of eight committee members, formed the basis of The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984. The recommendations included:

- A five-step career ladder program for teachers, which was an alternative to Governor Alexander's proposal;
- Five-year goals for the educational system in Tennessee, including goals that addressed teacher retention and satisfaction; and
- Provisions related to teacher education and preparation.

Since six committee members voiced strong opposition to the recommendations, a minority report was issued. This report opposed the career ladder plan. It urged consideration of the plan's potential impact on the relationships between state and local governments. It suggested that the career ladder plan may diminish the role of local school boards in teacher evaluation and tenure decisions. The report also questioned the value of deferred financial rewards as a means of attracting high-quality people into the teaching profession.

Outcomes

The committee's study process enabled its members to develop a new proposal for education reform that incorporated ideas from a variety of experts and policy papers that provided diverse ideas from outside as well as state consultants. According to staff, the process diffused some of the political controversy revolving around the teacher issues, although disagreement among the members over policy directions remained throughout the life of the Select Committee. The primary outcome of the committee's work was the development of The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984. This bill was voted out of the Select Committee with an eight-to-six margin, and sent to the legislature for its consideration.

In addition, the TEA persuaded the minority members of the Select Committee who voted against The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 to introduce an alternative. This alternative bill included a four-step career ladder and provisions for collective bargaining related to evaluations of teachers by local school systems. Select Committee staff suggested that this bill never received serious consideration by the legislature. Some of its provisions, however, were offered as amendments to The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 when it was considered by the Senate.

Response by the Legislature

Action on the Select Committee's education reform act occurred during a special session of the legislature that lasted seven weeks. The bill received the most attention from the House and Senate Education and Finance Committees. Much negotiation, however, went on between the Speaker of the House, the House sponsors, and the TEA. The governor's office also was actively involved in the passage of the bill.

After much debate and the acceptance of several amendments on the floor of both the House and the Senate, The Education Reform Act of 1984 passed. This act established significant changes in Tennessee's education system, including the following provisions affecting teachers:

- o A five-step career ladder;
- o Incentive pay; and
- o Across-the-board pay raises for all teachers.

In addition, funding for the reforms was approved through a temporary one-cent increase in the state sales tax in 1984. This increase was made permanent in 1985.

Although not all of the recommendations that evolved from the committee's study of teacher issues were included in the final legislation that was approved by the General Assembly, the process led to the development of a bill that was the basis for successful negotiation and passage of education reform in Tennessee.

Advice To Other States: Lessons Learned From Tennessee's Cost-Sharing Award Study Process

The study process proved valuable in evaluating teacher compensation issues and developing an innovative legislative proposal. Committee staff suggest that several factors contributed to the committee's productivity and progress.

- o Since the Select Committee met during the interim, attention was committed more easily to the education reforms, and the distractions characteristic of regular legislative sessions were minimized.
- o The contributions of expert testimony and the policy papers helped the Select Committee members look beyond the positions of the standard Tennessee education groups and lobbyists and consider new ideas on teacher compensation policy.
- o The expert testimony and policy papers also added crucial knowledge, objectivity, and credibility to the committee's work.
- o By calling on a wide range of witnesses, the Select Committee was able to divorce itself from domination of particularly strong interest groups, and at the same time, to accumulate a sound base of information on which to develop recommendations.

In addition to all of the other factors, staff suggested that of paramount importance to the committee's study were the commitment and continual involvement of its members and staff.

II

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN MAINE:

A CASE STUDY

The Study

The Maine Legislature used its 1985-86 cost-sharing award to conduct a field-based study to identify and document factors that could explain why people are attracted to the teaching profession, and why they stay in the field. The study was designed to provide information that would assist the legislature in developing policies related to teacher recruitment and retention.

Background

During the early 1980's the Maine Legislature focused a great deal of attention on education reform. One issue that received broad-based support from the governor, the legislature, teachers' associations, school superintendents, school boards, the university community, and the public at large was a desire to improve education by attracting and keeping "good" people in the teaching profession. Originating as a recommendation from a commission established by Governor Brennan and with widespread support, salary increases for teachers surfaced as the preferred way to enhance teacher recruitment and retention. In response to growing support for higher teacher compensation, the legislature in 1985 enacted a two-year, staged increase in base salaries for teachers.

During the debate over the salary bill, questions arose as to whether low pay was the primary factor leading to dissatisfaction with teaching. In addition, a study conducted by a graduate student in Maine showed the comparability of teachers' 10-month salaries and 12-month salaries of equivalent professionals. A group of minority party legislators was particularly impressed with the findings of this study and further raised the issue of whether teacher dissatisfaction was linked substantially to pay. These legislators suggested that if other factors also contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and lead to difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention, then legislation that merely raises salaries would not be sufficient to attract and keep high-caliber teachers in the state. As the discussions continued, bipartisan support developed for inquiry into other potential factors influencing teacher recruitment and retention.

In response to this growing debate, the Joint Standing Committee on Education initiated a statewide, field-based survey to identify a range of factors that contribute to dissatisfaction with teaching and affect recruitment and retention. The cost-sharing award financed part of this study.

Methodology

Because the legislature was interested in collecting a substantial amount of information from a wide range of individuals, the committee chose to conduct a statewide survey.

Maine's study included a literature review, the development and administration of a survey questionnaire, an analysis of teacher turnover rates in Maine, and legislative oversight of the study process. The study was staffed by one full-time legislative staff person, a second full-time person hired specifically for the project, and a part-time research assistant.

The Literature Review. The study began with a review of research literature that addressed teacher recruitment and retention. It explored the sources of motivation for teaching and the factors involved in satisfaction and dissatisfaction with teaching. This review was used as the basis for developing the analytic model for the study and the questions for the questionnaire.

The Survey Questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was designed to answer two major questions: "What attracts individuals to teaching?" and "What causes them to remain?" The survey included questions related to characteristics of teachers and prospective teachers, levels and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the teaching profession, and factors that motivate individuals to become teachers.

The survey underwent several revisions before it was administered. Project staff involved the legislators who were to oversee the study, along with representatives from the teachers' and administrators' associations in drafting and revising the questionnaire. Project staff suggested that this initial involvement was crucial to develop commitment to the study and to ensure that salient questions were included in the survey. Since the questionnaire was to be administered to three groups of subjects, three versions were developed.

The Sample. The sample consisted of three subsamples:

- A random sample of 477 active teachers who were employed full-time by the Maine public schools during the 1984-85 school year;
- 386 former teachers who had left the school system since 1983 for nonschool-related employment or unknown reasons; and
- 630 college-oriented high school students from 32 randomly selected schools in Maine.

All subjects were sent questionnaires, and return rates were high for all subsamples -- 79 percent for the active teachers, 56 percent for the former teachers, and 91 percent for the high school students. Project staff suggested that the return rates were high because the subjects perceived the study as having a great deal of credibility since it was sponsored by the legislature and supported actively by the education community.

Analysis of Teacher Turnover Rate. Turnover was determined by the number of first-year teachers within an administrative unit, including teachers filling vacancies and those filling newly created positions. Consideration also was given to subject areas and years of teaching. The analysis further included the distribution of vacancies and total positions in the various regions of the state and number of conditionally certified teachers. The Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services which annually collects data on teachers in the Maine schools, provided data for this analysis.

Legislative Oversight. A subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Education served as the review panel and provided legislative oversight for the study. This panel consisted of the House and Senate chairs and two committee members from the minority party. The legislative oversight was characterized by an open, informal structure. Oversight involved participation in developing the questionnaire, reviewing and discussing relevant papers, and consulting with lobby groups and members of the education community. The oversight panel worked cooperatively and cohesively and was concerned that the study provide meaningful information to the legislature.

Major Findings

Maine's study produced a number of important findings. The data revealed that:

- Individuals attracted to teaching generally find satisfaction from helping students develop their talents;
- Limited economic rewards do contribute to dissatisfaction with teaching, but do not explain why some people leave and others stay in the profession;
- Former teachers are more likely than active teachers to cite poor relationships with the school administration as a source of dissatisfaction with teaching.

In relation to turnover rates, the data showed that:

- The annual turnover rate in Maine is 10 percent and that it varies by subject area and region;
- Specific regional conditions contribute to higher or lower turnover in urban and rural areas.

Outcomes of the Study

The information generated by this study was meant to provide the legislature with documentation of reasons why individuals are interested in becoming teachers, factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the profession, and factors that lead teachers to leave the field. Although development of specific policy recommendations was not a stated objective of the study, the findings led the project staff to several conclusions with implications for Maine and for other states interested in teacher recruitment and retention policies. These conclusions include the following:

- It is inappropriate to generalize from national statistics on teacher retention and recruitment to state-level statistics. It is also inappropriate to generalize from turnover rates in one part of the state to rates for the whole state since turnover, recruitment, and retention are affected by subject area and regional conditions.
- It is important to look beyond salary issues in considering areas of teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Policies that would improve

school administration and interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators may readily affect teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Policy initiatives to enhance the preparation of administrators and teachers at the university level may contribute to improved recruitment and retention.

Response by the Legislature

The report of this study was distributed to the members of the legislature in February, 1986, after the conclusion of the legislative session. Project staff expect that the impact of the study will be apparent over time as the findings and implications are incorporated into future policy initiatives. Staff anticipate that the results of this study may influence the consideration of higher education policies during subsequent sessions of the legislature.

According to staff the greatest value of this study is that the findings have become part of Maine's knowledge base on teacher recruitment and retention. The findings also have provided legislators with an understanding that factors other than salary play a part in teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Advice to Other States: Lessons Learned from Maine's Cost-Sharing Award Study Process

According to project staff, several elements of the process that Maine used to develop and conduct its study of teacher recruitment and retention proved to be particularly important to the project's success. Of primary importance was securing legislative support and commitment. In Maine's case, active legislative involvement from the project's inception was invaluable in legitimizing the study and providing incentives for participation of the wide range of individuals involved.

Since the study depended upon cooperation from a variety of groups and individuals (i.e., education consultants, subjects) in addition to the legislators, it was crucial to develop the interest and commitment of the education community, the university community, and the department of education. The methods used in this research encouraged involvement and cooperation among these groups during all phases of the project from the initial discussions of what data were to be collected, to what the questionnaires would look like, through the series of revisions to the questionnaires, and during the data collection phase. According to project staff, all those who were involved developed a sense of ownership and recognition of the importance of the project, and were dedicated to its success. Staff also suggested that the groups cooperated with the legislative committee in an open environment that encouraged input and hard work from all.

Project staff suggest that a particularly valuable aspect of the data collection process in this study was access to the Department of Education's teacher turnover data base. This data base provided a source for accurately defining the numbers of teachers who left the field (over a period of several years), and the reasons they gave for leaving teaching. This information was invaluable to explain factors contributing to teacher turnover and for locating the subsample of former teachers.

Although the tangible impact of this study has yet to be demonstrated through legislative action, Maine's findings will provide a sound basis for broadening discussions of teacher recruitment and retention beyond salary questions and generalizations of national teacher turnover trends. As a result of the study, the legislature will have valid information to guide its response to statewide concerns over attracting and keeping quality teachers.

Maine's experience in studying these issues suggests that any state interested in addressing teacher recruitment and retention would do well to mount a systematic inquiry into its specific state conditions affecting the teaching profession, and not rely only on the patterns revealed in national studies.

III

IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING IN WASHINGTON:

A CASE STUDY

The Study

The Washington Legislature used its 1983-84 cost-sharing award to contract with private consultants to conduct a study of the state's financing system for higher education. The study was designed to provide information and recommendations to the legislature's Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure, and Management.

Background

Higher education represents the largest discretionary funding area in Washington's budget allocation process, and interest in revising the state's system of financing higher education was a major issue during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although agreement was widespread that the existing formula for funding higher education had serious flaws, controversy over revising the system arose out of a resistance to change and uncertainty about the effects of proposals for new and less familiar systems. During this time, little statewide consensus existed for any particular reform strategy. Groups including the legislature, the Council of University Presidents, the Council for Post Secondary Education, and the Office of Financial Management all considered alternatives to the existing system.

The major criticisms of the funding system from these groups centered on the formula's dependence on student enrollment for allocations to each institution. Policymakers felt that the formula system inhibited their ability to implement new priorities for higher education, weakened admission standards, encouraged over enrollment, and threatened the overall quality of higher education in the states. The system also was criticized because it provided few incentives for creativity and fiscal management. In addition, between 25 and 35 percent of the state's total allocation to higher education was appropriated outside of the formula to cover budget adjustments, equipment replacement, and support for community education and other program. Thus, the institutions' budgets began to experience an erosion of dollars for instruction.

With growing concern over the financial formula system and broader education issues, in 1982, the legislature enacted Senate Bill 3609 establishing the Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure, and Management. The committee's mandate was to review the public education system in the state, including the common schools and the colleges and universities, and to present recommendations for policy initiatives to the governor and the legislature in early 1985. Higher education finance was one major area included in the committee's mandate.

The committee, consisting of four legislators and thirteen citizens, had a budget to cover staff and research costs. The committee's work included consideration of finance and funding policy, state and local relationships, and issues of excellence and equity. The committee was committed to including input from both public and private groups and relied heavily on outside support.

The committee decided to contract with outside consultants not tied to any specific political orientation to conduct an objective study and provide recommendations related to higher education finance. The committee received financial support from the cost-sharing award for the consultants' study.

Methodology

The committee contracted with Lyman A. Glenny and William H. Pickens to review Washington's higher education finance system and to develop recommendations for change. According to committee staff, the consultants were selected because of their well-regarded reputations in the higher education finance field and because they were the best single-source consultants available.

The committee staff worked closely with the consultants in the early stages of the study. They were determined to be specific with the consultants in defining the objectives and expected outcomes. Decisions as to the actual methodology for collecting and analyzing the data and developing the recommendations were at the discretion of the consultants and were reviewed by the committee.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes. The primary objectives and expected outcomes that guided the study were:

- To provide a comprehensive analysis of Washington's system of funding higher education;
- To compare Washington's higher education funding system with that of other states; and
- To develop recommendations for the legislature that would provide the basis for legislative initiatives to revise the funding system for higher education.

Procedures. To meet the study objectives, the consultants used:

- An on-site examination of the higher education funding system through interviews with legislators, budget staff, higher education officials and others;
- A review of higher education financing in five other states (Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Minnesota) and comparisons with that of Washington.
- Recommendations developed from the interview data, review of Washington's funding system, and comparisons with that of other states; and
- Oversight of the study by the Temporary Committee.

Legislative Oversight. The committee and staff provided legislative oversight to the consultants' study. The oversight was designed to provide a forum for reviewing the consultants' progress and was not intended to direct the course of the study nor affect the nature of the recommendations. The consultants were given much leeway in conducting their study and functioned independently throughout the process.

Major Findings

Several findings evolved from the consultants' study that influenced their recommendations for reforming Washington's system of higher education. The major findings suggested that:

- Washington needed to clarify its priorities related to accountability, autonomy, quality, and diversity within the higher education system;
- Existing funding-formula approaches fail to encourage sound fiscal management, productivity, innovation, or responsiveness to changing community and state needs; and
- Higher education financing across the country has begun to change from an emphasis on strict state controls to greater institutional autonomy.

The recommendations that arose from these findings addressed broad higher education financing questions, specific state funding policies, and suggestions for a new strategy to replace Washington's formula method.

Outcomes of the Study

The outcomes of the consultant's study were useful at two levels. Many of the recommendations were incorporated into the committee's report The Paramount Duty that was presented to the governor and the legislature. In addition, the recommendations ultimately formed the basis of legislative discussion and subsequent action.

The Paramount Duty recommended that:

- The state should establish fiscal relationships with governing boards of the higher education institutions so that the colleges and universities will have increased flexibility in fiscal management;
- The state should adopt a simplified appropriation approach that stresses the primacy of instruction but also permits maximum flexibility in spending in other areas;
- Funds should be appropriated in three categories--instruction and instructional support, general institutional support, and plant operation and maintenance;
- Most emerging needs should be met through reallocation of funds--institutions would have the ability to roll forward revenues in the next budget cycle;
- New funding allocations should be comparable to the average of those of similar institutions in other states. Enhanced quality would be reflected in support levels that are higher than the average when compared with those of other institutions;
- The state should establish a specific budgetary method for funding enrollments that is congruent with the state's and the institutions' goals; flexible in order to meet changing demands; continually reviewed and revised; and developed jointly by the State Higher Education Board,

the Office of Financial Management, the colleges and universities, and legislative staff.

Response by the Legislature

Even before The Paramount Duty was formally presented to the governor and the legislature, some of the recommendations generated by the consultants' study were enacted into law. For the 1983-84 school year, the legislature passed a new financing approach that demonstrated a decentralized strategy by encouraging financial flexibility at the institutional level. Through the budget process, the state separated each institution's allocation into three categories--instruction, instructional support, and general purpose. Except for general purpose funds, however, full-time enrollment numbers continued to determine the basis of budget allocations to each institution. Under this new approach, instructional funds were not to be used for other purposes, but instructional support and general purpose funds could be reallocated. The new appropriation process also adopted the consultants' recommendation for peer institution comparisons in determining funding.

Some of the committee's recommendations were enacted into law. In a memorandum dated June 1985, Senator Marcus Gaspard, chairman of the Education Committee, suggested that the Temporary Committee's legislative proposals provided "an excellent basis from which further discussion can proceed." He further suggested that over the subsequent couple of years, it was likely that more of the proposals will be found on the legislative agenda as the legislature would have more time to consider them. Despite his praise of the committee's efforts, Senator Gaspard also acknowledged that its recommendations had not fully addressed the deteriorating economic conditions in the state, thereby limiting their usefulness in the short run.

Advice to Other States: Lessons Learned from Washington's Cost-Sharing Award Study Process

Washington state's cost-sharing award was used to hire consultants to conduct a study of the higher education finance system and to provide recommendations for change. According to committee staff, the decision to use consultants for the study was critical to the positive outcomes. By using outside consultants, some of the political controversy surrounding the financing of higher education was diffused. The outside consultants provided expertise and objectivity to this study, which contributed to the credibility and acceptance of their recommendations.

From their experiences, the committee staff identified several factors necessary for success in working with outside consultants. The most important consideration related to their selection. Washington staff stressed the importance of choosing established experts in the field of study who are sensitive to the issues and respected by legislators. In addition, they emphasized the need to hire consultants who have enough political savy to discover independently the political issues related to the topic under study and generate recommendations that are realistic and reasonable within the context of the state's political and social environment.

Beyond hiring consultants, staff suggested that it is important to convey to the consultants exactly what the issue to be studied is all about and to be

specific about the expected outcomes. After clarifying the issues, goals, scope, and expectations of the study, the staff recommended that the consultants be given latitude in determining the methodology, conducting the research, and developing the recommendations. Staff further suggested that some oversight is also appropriate throughout the process to ensure that the staff and legislators involved are well briefed and can monitor the progress of the project.

The State of Washington's experience in hiring consultants to study higher education finance proved to be valuable and useful. The consultants were able to provide responsible recommendations to the legislature that have since led to significant improvement in the higher education finance system.

IV

OVERSEEING THE STATE EDUCATION REFORMS IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

A CASE STUDY

The Study

The South Carolina General Assembly used its 1985-86 cost-sharing award to study the effectiveness of a legislative committee's oversight of the implementation of the Education Improvement Act of 1984. The study was designed to investigate the proper role of the oversight committee and to develop recommendations for future oversight activities relevant to South Carolina and other states.

Background

Education reform received much attention in South Carolina during the 1970s and early 1980s based on a widespread concern for improving the quality of schools throughout the state. The legislature responded to this concern with the passage of The Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984 and made a significant investment in far-reaching education reforms in South Carolina.

Development of the EIA began in 1983 as Governor Richard Riley defined education reform as a key issue for his administration. His office launched a full-scale campaign for support, which included appointment of two blue-ribbon committees to plan for school improvements and a statewide telephone survey to gauge public opinion. Based on the recommendations of the blue-ribbon committee and with evidence of public support for reforms, the EIA was introduced in the legislature.

Originally, the lawmakers did not receive the legislation enthusiastically. There was considerable recognition of the value of improving education, but the governor's bill and its fiscal implications became controversial. Legislative leadership did not support the EIA because of the proposed tax increase, and many members sought alternate funding strategies. According to staff, legislative resistance to the EIA also arose because the legislation originated in the governor's office. Traditionally, South Carolina is known as a legislature-dominated state, and some believed that support of the EIA in effect, would minimize the legislature's role and elevate the governor's role in reforming education.

Despite lack of support from leadership, a group of legislators, some of whom served on the blue-ribbon committees, mounted a diligent and well-organized effort to ensure passage of the EIA. According to legislative staff, these legislators worked with the governor's office, enlisted public support, and out-matched the legislative opposition in their efforts and understanding of the issues.

The EIA passed the legislature with most of the blue-ribbon committee recommendations in tact. One important provision of the EIA was the establishment of a legislative oversight committee, the Select Committee.

Legislative oversight was a critical aspect of South Carolina's education reforms for several reasons. The nature of the Select Committee's mandate differed from ordinary legislative oversight because it involved monitoring and assessing the implementation of the programs, rather than evaluation after the programs were developed and in operation. In addition, because of the fiscal controversy over the EIA, there was definite interest in ensuring that expenditure of newly generated tax dollars would produce the intended improvements in South Carolina's education system. Therefore, the Select Committee provided a mechanism for monitoring accountability. It also provided a method for continual involvement of the legislature and the administration in education reforms so that emerging issues would receive appropriate and informed attention from key policymakers.

The Select Committee. The committee's oversight consisted of exploration of program implementation plans at the state and local levels, review of proposed regulations, development of recommendations for implementation and new legislation, and reports to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education. The committee, although required to meet only once a quarter, held monthly meetings as its primary method of gathering information. It heard testimony from staff of administrative agencies with jurisdiction over program implementation, members of professional organizations, and local program administrators. According to staff, with aggressive leadership the committee worked diligently and was very dedicated to and informed about the issues.

Membership on the Select Committee included legislators and representatives from the governor's office and other administrative agencies. The committee originally was staffed by volunteers from the governor's office and the division of public accountability; but in 1985, the legislature appropriated funds for a full-time research assistant to staff the committee.

The Select Committee functioned independently of other legislative standing committees and nonlegislative agencies. The committee's work was not integrated formally with the education committees, and follow-up of agency implementation of the committee's recommendations was not conducted.

In addition to its other work, the Select Committee created special committees and commissioned a number of studies, including one to look into the Select Committee's operations. This study was funded with support of a cost-sharing award in 1985.

Methodolody

The study of the Select Committee's operations was based on the results of a survey administered to 99 subjects. The study was conducted by legislative staff and designed to answer the following questions:

- What is the proper nature and role of the Select Committee?
- Are there differences in perception about the oversight process between groups that provide information to the Select Committee (input group), groups that get information from it (output group), and the committee itself (process group)?

The Survey. A 24-item, five-point, Likert-type scale was constructed and used as the survey instrument. Responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The items were divided into four categories designed to measure the subject's perception of:

- The nature of legislative oversight (including the structure, membership, and meaning of oversight);
- The role of the Select Committee (its relationship to other groups, the need for expansion or reduction of its authority, oversight versus program administration priorities);
- Influences on the oversight process (use of and access to information and other resources; the context in which concerns are raised; and
- the impact of oversight (legislative change, budget and lobbying conducted by the Select Committee, oversight activities that ensured implementation and that reflected the EIA's intent).

Members of the committee debated the structure of the items that were included in the survey. The Select Committee and staff agreed that a statistical analysis of the results would be important since it would be the most credible way to interpret and report the findings.

The Sample. A systematic sampling procedure was used to select the final sample from a population of 280 individuals. The subjects were divided into the following groups:

- Input Group--including State Department of Education personnel and members of the blue-ribbon committee (total in this group was 57);
- Output Group--including members of the State Board of Education, members of the General Assembly (including senior members with expertise in finance and education), and members of professional organizations (total number in this group was 26);
- Process Group--including members of the Select Committee and staff (total number in this group was 16).

The response rate on the questionnaire for each subgroup was high: 82 percent for the input group, 61 percent for the output group, and 81 percent for the process group. The final sample, then, consisted of 76 respondents.

Data Analysis. A factor analysis of the questionnaire revealed the following subscales:

- Structure--items related to the nature and impact of oversight;
- Expansion--items related to the role of oversight, particularly related to increasing the Select Committee's functions;
- Influences--items focusing on influences on the Select Committee's relationships with other agencies involved in the oversight process.

To answer the first question of interest in this study (what is the proper role of the oversight committee?), means for the whole sample were calculated for the items on the subscales.

In order to examine differences in perception about the operations of the Select Committee between the input, output, and process groups, analysis of variance was performed. Group differences were interpreted using Duncan's Multiple Range Test.

Major Findings

In general, the results of this study suggest that:

- The Select Committee's proper role is to influence implementation of the EIA through clarifying legislative intent, providing information and advice to the General Assembly, and establishing public confidence in the law;
- The Select Committee's open format was valuable to the oversight process;
- There was interest in maintaining the committee after implementation was complete, but some respondents were reluctant to expand its authority (the output group was more interested in expanding the committee's authority than the other subsamples);
- Oversight could be strengthened with greater involvement of professional organizations. students, parents, private-sector representatives, teachers, and principals.

Outcomes

The study produced two major outcomes: a series of recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the Select Committee's oversight process, and recommendations for model legislation that other states could use in establishing oversight committees.

Recommendations to Increase the Select Committee's Effectiveness. The authors of the study report recommend that the Select Committee should:

- Review the statute and propose an amendment that would clarify the Select Committee's responsibility and authority;
- Adopt a formal process through which professional organizations, task forces, individuals, consultants, and others may be included more effectively in oversight;
- Develop formal and reciprocal methods of involvement with standing committees that have legislative responsibility for education reform;
- Develop procedures for monitoring the actions of agencies charged with implementation, after recommendations have been issued by the committee;
- Provide information to the General Assembly and the public in a systematic, frequent, and ongoing manner; and

o Develop a philosophy about the programs in the EIA to guide decisions.

Recommendations for Model Legislation. The recommendations for model legislation were based on the results of the study as well as on an examination of statutes from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The description of Model Legislation includes recommendations defining the legislative mandate, committee membership, committee responsibilities and duties, and broad strategies for conducting oversight.

Response by the Legislature

According to Select Committee staff, the legislature's response to the study has been positive, as the study contributed to a solidification of support for the committee's actions. In addition, progress has been made in looking at formalizing relationships with the standing education committees and in considering proposals to enlarge the membership of the Select Committee. The legislature, too, is considering calling for a comprehensive study of the EIA to supplement the Select Committee's oversight.

Advice to Other States: Lessons Learned from South Carolina's Cost-Sharing Award Study Process

South Carolina's study responded to a need by the Select Committee to examine its operations and provided important information on the proper role of an oversight committee. Staff who worked on the study emphasized the value in conducting this research since it highlighted the major contributions of the Select Committee in implementing the education reforms and provided suggestions for future modifications of its operations. The use of the research methodology and statistical analysis of the data also provided a sense of objectivity and rigor to the study that contributed to the acceptance of its findings.

Establishing a legislative oversight committee offers a number of advantages to legislators who seek to remain active in formulating state education policy. First, it can provide lawmakers with a formal mechanism through which to request, obtain, and share information on both the implementation and impact of their education reforms. Second, it can help to sustain the legislature's commitment to the reforms by reserving for itself a direct role in monitoring the progress as well as a method to involve new lawmakers in education issues. Third, an oversight committee can provide the education community and the public an access point inside the legislature to voice their concerns about the education reforms. And fourth, it can provide a unifying vehicle for both houses of the legislature as well as for the various policy and fiscal committees to share information on the current reforms and to initiate any needed revisions.

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